

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Minutes of the Meeting of May 26th, 2021

A virtual/telephonic meeting will be held via Zoom as the result of publicly declared Covid-19 state emergency necessitating remote meetings.

Commissioners Present: Ani Chaghatzbanian, Chairman; Michael Crowley; Michael Lynch; Jessica Stram; Emily Lucibello; Peter Cozzolino

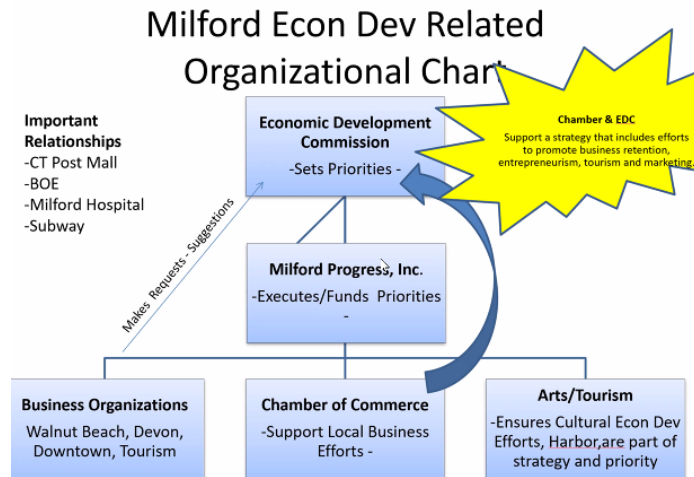
Advisors present: Julie Nash

Also present: Cassandra Schull, Greg Harla

Absent: Paige Miglio

- I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL – CHAGHATZBANIAN
Chairman Chaghatzbanian called the meeting to order at 12:04pm
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 24, 2021 MEETING
Chairman Chaghatzbanian asked if we should make a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Lynch and Mr. Cozzolino made and seconded a motion to approve the minutes of March 24th, 2021 meeting. Unanimously approved.
- III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT & INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS – CHAGHATZBANIAN
Chairman Chaghatzbanian welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.
- V. MILFORD CARES ACT GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW
Chairman Chaghatzbanian asked Director Nash if she would like to speak on behalf of the applications. Director Nash asked everyone to clarify that they reviewed the applications. Unanimous yes. Chairman Chaghatzbanian mentioned the first grant to vote for is Artfish42, sent on April 14th. Mr. Lynch made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Stram. Unanimous approval.
- VI. EDC PROJECT DISCUSSION – CHAGHATZBANIAN
Chairman Chaghatzbanian suggested assigning more roles to each person and reaching out to other local EDC groups to understand how others can contribute more of what they enjoy. Chairman Chaghatzbanian mentioned the struggle of not having funds and to bridge the gap of having funds for the betterment of the City. Director Nash discussed needing a replacement for MPI and a transition from Mr. Franke and the new replacement. Mrs. Miglio mentioned an individual from the Chamber asked about kickstarting a beautification committee with the chamber and suggested having the chamber and MPI work together as a joint committee to match funds and make the group more active. Director Nash confirmed that is how the group is supposed to be managed but has changed through the years. Mr. Lynch asked for clarification on the current standing of MPI's status with members. Director Nash stated that the committees are a lot of work with full-time roles and volunteering for MPI. She mentioned MPI has always struggled with signage and beautification and would recommend filling the role get the program moving. Chairman Chaghatzbanian redirected to discuss what MPI should look like. She suggested Step 1: Someone needs to get in touch with Mr. Franke. Mr. Lynch volunteered to get

in touch with Mr. Franke. Chairman Chaghatzbanian mentioned Step 2: What happens when we get in touch, what's the next step? Director Nash suggested that we get the list of current MPI members so that we can get contact information and start back up. Greg Harla asked for clarification on the budget and where MPI funds are. Director Nash briefly mentioned money was statutory recognized as an agency in the 70's and run by Ray Macaluso for a bunch of projects. The chamber worked with them, they were given \$10,000/year and chamber received \$5,000/year to assist with finances and projects. The Alderman pulled away from the chamber and reorganized because they didn't feel the funds were being handle properly. Director Nash confirmed MPI has their own account and checkbook. Miglio clarified leadership with Chamber is different than previous. Chairman Chaghatzbanian asked what we want to do moving forward with MPI. Lynch mentioned needing a new meeting to understand what is happening and what hasn't been happening with MPI. Director Nash shared organizational chart. (Image below)



Director Nash commented she is open to change and would recommend a strategy report to assess next best steps. Paige Miglio mentioned that previous discussion mentioned more of a circle vs hierarchy and offered to reorganize with working document. Paige suggests “adopt a spot” to assist with funds. Director Nash said she would be happy to do a presentation to discuss with Chamber Board and work together. Lynch mentioned that Mr. Crowley cc'd him in an email to Franke Bud to understand the next transitional steps for MPI.

Chairman Chaghatzbanian reiterated the importance of hosting EDC events and having more of a presence in Milford. Mr. Harla suggested starting small, something as simple as working with MPI to create window coverings logos and “coming soon” signage to help brighten downtown vacant properties. He referenced 1 Broad Street and creating a uniform message that we care as a city. Chairman Chaghatzbanian mentioned the Milford Map with businesses who sponsored the map to help provide the funding for it. Director Nash mentioned we have done posters in vacant areas and they don't last but is open to revisiting. Committee re-visited the discussion of paper maps, cost and design. Director Nash mentioned wanting to come up with Econ. Dev. Questionnaire to businesses on how they're doing and what they need from us to assess the temperature of the businesses and follow up to assist them. Chairman Chaghatzbanian asked for clarification on what the ultimate goal is for EDC. Director Nash mentioned constituency is businesses, they are the focus. Chairman Chaghatzbanian asked for clarification on ost road businesses vs downtown. Director Nash mentioned that the mom and pop shops are the goal to give them support vs. chains who have more support. Chairman Chaghatzbanian asked if anyone has further questions? Emily Lucibello said she would check-in with local businesses and Michael Lynch mentioned he could assist. Chairman Chaghatzbanian suggested starting a map committee and a visitation committee. Mr. Lynch said he would do visitation committee with Emily. Committee mentioned next meeting in person meeting outside at a business or on the green. Agreed on City Hall for next location meeting.

A. EDC BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY – See above notes for VI.

VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY – NASH

Director Nash mentioned high rate of unemployment at 7%, dropped from 8% last month which is still high. New business starts we are in a good spot, we are on track to beat last years new business starts. She has talked to other directors and has concluded that people are more able to start their small businesses coming across more money with the pandemic. Michalizzi's opened, Los Cobos is now Strega and owners are excited to open. Director Nash Mentioned Milford cruise business is neat and suggested everyone reach out and read up on them. Valley Tool is building 100,000 sqft manufacturing business in Milford. Nash mentioned she is working on a Tourism video with Cassandra and Alex on a "we're back" video to promote that our businesses are open and ready for visitors to come stay with us. She continued that we are working on Make Music Day June 21st and match making sign ups should be available next week for businesses and musicians to flood streets with music. Porchfest will return Oct. 2nd and will run a little different, we are recruiting neighborhood captains for various areas in Milford. Please reach out to us to sign up as a captain so we can start the discussions. Director Nash would like to re-start the welcome to Milford letters for new businesses. Chairman Chaghatzbanian asked if anyone had questions or comments. No response.

VIII. STANDING ITEMS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. TOURISM – MIGLIO

Chairman Chaghatzbanian asked if Paige would like to discuss events. Mrs. Miglio said Happy Hunts is returning in October as a Boo's museum (not booze) and that the booseum happens all over the country as a haunted house. Paige mentioned monthly concerts starting June 26th through November ending with Our Town; she gave a shout out to UI to assist a lighting sponsorship for park lighting for shows. She said everyone is excited to be back and hosting events but the MAC is not back in person indoor as everything was already pre-planned outdoor. Theater camp is happening this summer and Eisenhower Park helps expand their programs.

B. CHAMBER

Chairman Chaghatzbanian mentioned new Chamber president has not been announced yet. Paige mentioned the announcement will be tonight and she will be joining the calls moving forward.

C. PERMIT & LAND USE – None.

D. VISITATION REPORTS – ALL

IX. OLD BUSINESS – None.

X. NEW BUSINESS – Previously discussed.

Lynch made motion to adjourn, Jessica Stram seconded motion. Meeting adjourned.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING, 4TH WEDNESDAY JUNE 23, 2021 WILL RESUME IN PERSON AT PARSONS GOVERNMENT CENTER WITH OPTION TO CALL IN.